

Decision 05-01-046 January 27, 2005

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

John Dickey and Luanne Aulenback-Dickey,

Complainants,

vs.

Southern California Edison Company,

Defendant.

(ECP)

Case 04-07-052

(Filed July 27, 2004)

John Dickey, for complainants
George Coutts, for defendant.

ORDER DENYING RELIEF

Complainants assert that their electricity usage and bill increased after Southern California Edison Company (SCE) installed an Encoder Receiver Transmitter (ERT) meter at their residence at 254 Renoak Way, Arcadia. Complainants request that the Commission order SCE to restore their electricity bills to a level equal to their electricity bills prior to the installation of the ERT meter or to reinstall their old meter. Defendant denied the allegations. Public hearing was held December 3, 2004.

Defendant's witness testified that for years SCE had read complainants' meter from the backyard of complainants' neighbor at 248 Renoak Way. Visually reading the meter located at the complainants' address became a problem once the complainants' neighbor had their meter replaced with an ERT meter. The

ERT meter installed at the 248 Renoak Way address was necessary due to multiple dogs on the property, creating a safety issue. After the installation of an ERT meter at the 248 Renoak Way address, SCE meter readers no longer had access to the neighbor's yard, which was the only way for the meter reader to read complainants' meter. Direct access to complainants' meter, which is located behind a locked gate on the complainants' residence, was not available to the meter reader. Complainant testified the gate was locked to prevent children from accessing his swimming pool.

SCE's witness testified that one of the primary functions of an ERT meter is to alleviate meter access problems, as was the case at the complainants' residence and also at the neighbor's residence. There is very little difference between a manually read meter and an electronically read ERT meter. The ERT meter is equipped with a device enabling a SCE meter reader to read the ERT meter through a radio transmitted frequency, thus allowing collection of electricity consumption data without the need to actually see the meter, at distances as far as 500 yards.

The ERT meter located at complainants' property was tested by an SCE representative on December 22, 2003. The results of the test produced a fast/slow reading of .2% which is well within the 1.0% plus/minus allowable standard, as defined in SCE Tariff Rule 17. No rate adjustment is warranted. There are some 600,000 ERT meters installed in SCE's territory.

Complainants request that if they are not entitled to a rate adjustment, then SCE should replace the ERT meter with their old meter. They would give SCE a key to their backyard. The evidence persuades us that the ERT meter recorded consumption accurately and complainants' electric bills are correct. If, as complainants allege, their old meter recorded electricity consumption at about

half of the ERT meter, it is clear that the old meter was defective and should not be reinstalled.

Assignment of Proceeding

Carl W. Wood is the Assigned Commissioner and Robert Barnett is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The relief requested is denied.
2. Case 04-07-052 is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated January 27, 2005, at San Francisco, California.

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY
President
GEOFFREY F. BROWN
SUSAN P. KENNEDY
Commissioners

Comr. Grueneich recused herself from this agenda item and was not part of the quorum in its consideration.